

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9852

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6139

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, XF

SUBJECT: ARAFAT'S VISIT TO MOSCOW: FIRST THOUGHTS

REF: MOSCOW 18079, DEC 2, 1974

1. SUMMARY: IN THE COMMUNIQUE (PRAVDA MAY 5) CONCLUDING THE LATEST VISIT OF ARAFAT AND PLO DELEGATION, THE SOVIETS SUCCEEDED IN GETTING ARAFAT TO ACCEPT MENTION OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN A NEW GENEVA CONFERENCE. BUT THE COMMUNIQUE DOES NOT CALL FOR PARTICIPATION BY THE PLO PER SE, NOR DOES IT SAY AT WHAT STAGE THE "REPRESENTATIVES OF
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THE ARAB PEOPLE OF PALESTINE" SHOULD PARTICIPATE. THE

ATMOSPHERICS IN THE PUBLISHED MATERIALS DO NOT INDICATE WHAT ARAFAT MAY HAVE GOTTEN IN RETURN FOR THE MORE POSITIVE LANGUAGE ON GENEVA. INDEED THERE ARE SOME SIGNS OF COOLNESS. WHILE THE SOVIETS REITERATED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE, NOTHING WAS SAID ABOUT THE PLO'S BEING THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, NOR ABOUT PLO CONTROL OF LIBERATED LANDS, NOR ABOUT THE STILL-UNOPENED PLO OFFICE IN MOSCOW. MOREOVER, SOVIET SPONSORSHIP OF THE VISIT WAS KEPT VAGUE, AND ARAFAT, IN CONTRAST TO HIS LAST VISIT IN NOVEMBER WHEN HE SAW KOSYGIN, THIS TIME DID NO BETTER THAN GROMYKO. END SUMMARY.

2. COMMUNIQUE INCLUDES A FAIRLY STANDARD SOVIET REFERENCE TO THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE BY SAYING THAT "THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ARAB PEOPLE OF PALESTINE" SHOULD TAKE PART WITH "RIGHTS EQUAL" TO THOSE OF THE OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES. HOWEVER, IN CONTRAST TO THE COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING ARAFAT'S LAST VISIT (REFTEL), BOTH SIDES SIGNED OFF ON THIS FORMULATION. NO DATE WAS MENTIONED FOR THE RECONVENING OF THE CONFERENCE, NOR WAS IT CLEARLY STATED HOW THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE REPRESENTED OR WHEN THEY SHOULD BEGIN THEIR PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS.

3. AS OPPOSED TO NOVEMBER'S DOCUMENT, INCLUDED THIS TIME IS A UNILATERAL SOVIET REFERENCE TO SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE FOR THE RETURN OF ALL LAND OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL IN 1967, AS WELL AS THE REALIZATION OF THE LEGITIMATE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE ARAB PEOPLE OF PALESTINE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THEIR OWN NATIONAL "STATE". NOT INCLUDED, HOWEVER, AGAIN IN CONTRAST TO THE LAST COMMUNIQUE, IS A REFERENCE TO PLO CONTROL OF ANY LIBERATED TERRITORY. AND THIS TIME, APPARENTLY, ARAFAT REJECTED ANY REFERENCE TO UN RESOLUTIONS.

4. ATMOSPHERICS OF THE VISIT WERE NOT WHOLLY POSITIVE, THOUGH THE COMMUNIQUE SAID THE TALKS WERE "WARM AND FRIENDLY." AS IN THE PAST, THE OFFICIAL STATUS OF THE PLO DELEGATION WAS VAGUE, AND MENTION OF A SPONSOR WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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OMITTED IN OFFICIAL STATEMENTS. GROMYKO AND PONAMAREV PARTICIPATED ON THE SOVIET SIDE; WHILE GROMYKO GAVE THE TOAST AT THE KREMLIN DINNER MAY 4, THE TASS ACCOUNT DID NOT NAME HIM OR ANYONE ELSE AS THE HOST. THERE IS NO PUBLIC INDICATION THAT ANYONE HIGHER MET WITH ARAFAT; HE SAW KOSYGIN ON HIS LAST VISIT IN NOVEMBER. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY THE SOVIETS PUT ARAFAT IN A HOLDING PATTERN (HAVING HIM AT THE MAY DAY PARADE AND THEN

SHOWING HIM BAKU FOR THREE DAYS); POSSIBLY THERE WAS SOME TROUBLE WHICH HAD TO BE RESOLVED AT THE MAY 4 MEETING. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF THE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED PLO OFFICE IN MOSCOW, NOR OF INDIRECT SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE PLO AS THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE; BOTH TOPICS WERE PROMINENT FEATURES OF THE LAST COMMUNIQUE.

5. THE COMMUNIQUE'S REFERENCE TO THE TWO SIDES' OPPOSITION TO "ANY KIND OF BILATERAL SEPARATE DEALS ISOLATED FROM A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT" IS CLEARLY DIRECTED AT THE U.S. BUT IT LEAVES THE DOOR OPEN FOR A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH WITHIN AN OVERALL FRAMEWORK. STOESSEL

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